

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-05 /054 W

----- 071499

R 101913Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1426

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY QUITO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 4444

GUATEMALA FOR ROCAP

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: INCO, HO

SUBJECT: BANANAS-FIRST VISIT TO HONDURAS OF UNITED BRANDS PRESIDENT

WALLACE BOOTH

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 4428

BEGIN SUMMARY. WALLACE BOOTH, PRESIDENT OF UNITED BRANDS SINCE MAY 1975, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR SANCHEZ OCTOBER 9. MR. BOOTH RECOUNTED SUBSTANCE OF HIS IMPRESSIONS AFTER HAVING SPOKEN WITH CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR AND INA DIRECTOR MARIO MALDONADO AND CENTRAL BANK PRESIDENT BUESO, AND LATER ADVISED ECOMOFF CONCERNING DISCUSSIONS WITH BENJAMIN VILLANUEVA, NEWLY APPOINTED HEAD OF HONDURAN BANANA CORPORATION. END SUMMARY.

1. IN BRIEF, MR. BOOTH CONSIDERS HE WAS CORDIALLY RECEIVED

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BY ALL HONDURAN OFFICIALS. HE BELIEVES WORKABLE RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN GOH AND HIS CORPORATION IS PROBABLE OUTCOME OF A DEVELOPING NEW RELATIONSHIP. ALTHOUGH PRIMARY PURPOSE OF MR. BOOTH'S TRIP WAS RECONNAISSANCE OF BANANA AND OTHER INTERESTS OF HIS CORPORATION IN HONDURAS AND COURTESY CALLS, HIS IMPRESSION IS STRONGLY POSITIVE CONCERNING KEY PEOPLE WITH WHOM THE CORPORATION MUST WORK IN HONDURAS.

2. IT IS LIKELY THAT UNITED BRANDS WILL SELECT A NEGOTIATOR TO ENTER INTO THE DIFFICULT PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING A WORKABLE NEW RELATIONSHIP. AMONG THOSE UNDER CONSIDERATION WITHIN THE COMPANY IS BOB WALKER WHO IS CURRENTLY HANDLING DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS IN PANAMA.

COMMENT. EMBASSY CONSIDERS MR. BOOTH'S VISIT AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS. HE IS PERSONALLY CHARMING, OPEN-MINDED, AND PERCEPTIVE OF MANY ELEMENTS OF COMPLEX PROBLEM HERE. EMBASSY CONSIDERS HIS OFFER OF COMPLETE COOPERATION WITH GOH GENUINE AND ACCEPTED BY HONDURAN OFFICIALS AS SUCH. WE CONCUR IN THE NECESSITY FOR HAVING HIGH QUALITY NEGOTIATOR REPRESENT UNITED BRANDS, ESPECIALLY DURING FORMULATIVE STAGES OF STATE CORPORATION WHEN DATA ACCUMULATION AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO DEVELOPMENT OF A RATIONAL HONDURAN BANANA POLICY. MR. BOOTH WELL AWARE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXPRESSIONS OF GOOD WILL AND THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH WILL ARISE AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE.

I NOTE MR. BOOTH STAYED VERY CLOSE TO SCENARIO FOR HIS VISIT WHICH WAS DEVELOPED WITH KEVIN CORRIGAN DESPITE SOME CONSERVATIVE VOICES WITHIN CORPORATION. I DERIVE FROM THIS THAT CORPORATION'S NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT HAS HAD EXCELLENT BEGINNING.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TEGUCI04444
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750353-1080
From: TEGUCIGALPA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751064/aaaacevi.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 TEGUCIGALPA 4428
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 SEP 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <17 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BANANAS-FIRST VISIT TO HONDURAS OF UNITED BRANDS PRESIDENT WALLACE BOOTH
TAGS: BTRA, HO, UNITED BRANDS, INCO, (BOOTH, WALLACE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006